

City of Springfield
Work Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2004.

The City of Springfield council met in a work session in the Jesse Maine Meeting Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, November 29, 2004 at 6:00 p.m., with Council President Fitch presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Councilors Fitch, Lundberg, Ralston, Woodrow and Pishioneri. Also present were City Manager Mike Kelly, Assistant City Manager Cynthia Pappas, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

Mayor Leiken and Councilor Ballew were absent (excused).

1. South 42nd Street Reconstruction Project, Phase 1 (P20347).

City Engineer Al Peroutka introduced Civil Engineer Jeff Paschall and Traffic Engineer Brian Barnett. Mr. Paschall presented the staff report on this item. Last year the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) transferred the jurisdiction of South 42nd Street to the city. With that transfer came funding to add urban improvements to the road including pedestrian facilities and cyclist facilities. A pedestrian fatality initiated the process to make this roadway safer. South 42nd Street will be reconstructed from Jasper Road north to the Mt. Vernon Road during the summer of 2005. The City Council must approve conceptual design elements in order to move forward with the final design.

The staff's design proposal for South 42nd Street from Jasper Road to Mt. Vernon Road includes full urban improvements, including new widened pavement, curb and gutter, a new drainage system and outlet, improved street lighting, on-street bike lanes, sidewalks, and street trees. The proposal includes roundabouts as intersection controls at both the Jasper Road and Mt. Vernon Road intersections. The roundabouts are proposed to increase vehicular and pedestrian safety, to provide traffic capacity needed in the future, and to reduce traffic speeds near these intersections. The conceptual design also includes an intermittent landscaped raised median. Breaks in the median will be located to provide full access to adjacent property owners and the business located at the northeast corner of the Jasper Road/South 42nd Street intersection. The intermittent raised median between Jasper Road and Mt. Vernon Road will reduce vehicular conflict points and provide safer pedestrian crossings. Some of the design elements will require acquisition of property outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Pedestrian safety is the key issue in this project. The staff proposal is shown in Attachment A included in the agenda packet.

In formulating the design proposal, staff took into account input provided by the members of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), comments collected at the neighborhood open house meeting, and the transportation impact analysis for this road.

CAC members initially questioned the use of roundabouts as intersection controls and also questioned the initial staff suggestion for an unbroken raised median. After further discussion over several meetings, the CAC is at this point supportive of the roundabouts being proposed and supportive of the raised median as modified to include breaks in the median for better property access. An overriding concern of the CAC is to assure that the final design emphasizes pedestrian

safety. There appears to be consensus of the CAC that the proposal shown in Attachment A included in the agenda packet addresses this concern well. An on-going concern of the businesses at the South 42nd/Jasper Road intersection is that construction of the project will adversely affect traffic patterns during construction and thus affect their businesses during this time frame. Staff is continuing to work with those businesses to schedule the construction and provide adequate signing for customers to minimize impacts.

A public hearing is scheduled on December 6 to receive final public comments on the proposed design and to receive final council design approval.

Mr. Paschall said the project has been divided into two phases. Phase one will be from Mt. Vernon Road to Jasper Road and will be constructed in the summer of 2005. Part of the process included forming a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide feedback and input. He discussed the membership of the CAC. Mr. Paschall introduced Jim Keegan, Principal from Mt. Vernon Elementary and Jeannie Crane, neighbor in the 42nd Street neighborhood who initiated the concern over this segment of the road. Mr. Keegan and Ms. Crane were available for questions from council.

Mr. Paschall said there were several concerns brought up by CAC members. The first was the timing of the construction specifically as it applies to the businesses. The business owners expressed concerns of business losses that were experienced during the 1997 project on Jasper Road. The business owners would like construction to begin as late as possible in the construction season and to keep the road open. There was also concern about the suitability of the roundabouts for truck traffic and making the right-of-way acquisition as fair to everyone as possible.

Mr. Pishioneri asked if staff had made it as fair as possible for right-of-way acquisition.

Mr. Paschal said they would be making it fair. They are waiting to make their proposal once they get the topographic survey completed. It will come back to council.

Councilor Ralston asked why the raised median was necessary.

Mr. Barnett said the raised median provides access control, reduction of speed to an extent, and an opportunity for pedestrians to have a refuge when crossing mid-block.

Councilor Ralston said there are two or three properties that have driveways that would run into the roundabout.

Mr. Barnett pointed out on the map the properties being discussed. He explained how those properties would have to use the roundabout.

Councilor Ralston said he is concerned about the truck traffic. The roundabout at Mt. Vernon does not look large enough to handle truck traffic.

Mr. Barnett said they would design the roundabout at Mt. Vernon to allow any highway legal truck to travel north or south. Any single unit truck, such as a fire truck or garbage truck, would be able to make a right or left turn at that roundabout. Larger trucks would need to come in from the larger roundabout at Jasper Road and 42nd Street.

Councilor Woodrow asked why a roundabout would be safer for pedestrians than a traffic signal which would stop traffic completely.

Mr. Barnett said the United States does not have sufficient pedestrian information available to answer that question, but in England the collision rate is twice with signals rather as with roundabouts. He said there was a traffic study done for the corridor. The study identified Mt. Vernon Road and Jasper Road intersections and included volume projections for future years to 2025 with and without the Jasper Road Extension being completed. In both cases a traffic signal was not warranted at Mt. Vernon Road because of low side street traffic volumes. Putting in an unwarranted signal often increases vehicular accidents. That was one of the reasons for choosing a roundabout at that location.

Councilor Woodrow asked about truck traffic. The roundabout at Jasper Road looks like it would lower someone's property value if property was needed for the roundabout. He asked if it could be a Measure 37 issue.

Mr. Barnett said the property owner who operates the store has been a part of the CAC, has been actively involved and is supportive of the CAC recommendation. There is a minimal amount of right-of-way that would be necessary from that parcel. He reminded council that the drawing in their agenda packet was a schematic drawing, not a final design.

Councilor Woodrow said he does not like roundabouts, but does understand the concern about a traffic signal at Mt. Vernon. It is difficult to imagine a roundabout where traffic continues to move being safer than a traffic signal which would cause traffic to stop.

Mr. Leahy said in response to Councilor Woodrow's question about a Ballot Measure 37 issue, the initial position of the city is that the street is required for the protection of public health and safety, which is one of the areas that is exempt under Measure 37.

Councilor Pishioneri asked how the people on the west side of the street would get into their home if they were coming from the east on Jasper Road.

Mr. Barnett explained how they could do that by going through the roundabout or in a side street.

Councilor Pishioneri asked how they would get in during construction.

Mr. Barnett described how they could get in during the construction period. An alternative would be to make a u-turn.

Councilor Lundberg said the overriding reason this is being done is because children are crossing the street and there is a safety factor. Whatever is done is intended to create a safer street. She is willing to do more than in a usual setting. She asked where the Mt. Vernon school access is located and where the children cross South 42nd Street.

Mr. Barnett pointed it out on the map. He noted that there would also be park construction going on during this time.

Councilor Lundberg asked what changed at the intersection of 42nd Street and Jasper which has always been awkward.

Mr. Barnett explained how the intersection is currently configured.

Councilor Lundberg said any change in that intersection would be an improvement. Some of the turning movement may make it more dangerous and that is a concern. She discussed the medians and where they were located.

Mr. Barnett said this is the recommendation of the CAC and staff supports it as well. This isn't the decision on exactly what gets designed.

Councilor Lundberg said there could be room for more movement to allow cars to enter and exit properties.

Councilor Fitch asked Mr. Keegan about input received by the CAC on the proposal. She asked if any of the property owners voiced their opinions on the committees' recommendations.

Mr. Keegan said he was just an observer of the CAC meetings. He is the principal of Mt. Vernon, but does not live in the neighborhood. He said he was impressed by the process and the consensus of the committee was that the safety of the children was utmost. There were a lot of opinions about roundabouts and medians and there was a lot of give and take. The open house was amazing and approximately forty to sixty people attended.

Ms. Crane said she does live in the neighborhood and was part of the CAC. She said it was a good process. She has her own personal opinions about the design, but the process was good. Given what there was to work with, things went through very well. She personally doesn't like the median, but every aspect of the project has pros and cons. She was for the roundabouts to slow traffic down, but she also heard concerns about the roundabouts. There must be sidewalks and bike lanes would be great. It is not too hard to improve this road. There was concern about overimproving the road. She understands the point in putting in the median, but she pointed out some of the negatives of the median, too, such as children using it as a place to play around. Allowing the traffic to flow with the roundabout would be a good idea. There may not be a perfect answer. The big issue is to make it safe for the pedestrians and the children.

Councilor Fitch asked if staff planned on contacting the Oregon Transportation Association (OTA) for their input.

Mr. Paschall said he did contact OTA and spoke with a local representative. They will be in later in the week to look at the design and will bring any concerns to the public hearing scheduled for December 6.

Councilor Woodrow asked if ODOT would provide maintenance on the landscaped median.

Mr. Barnett said it is a city facility so it would be the city's responsibility. Any additional costs for that maintenance would belong to the city.

Councilor Woodrow asked if the CAC agreed to the presentation made by staff with the roundabouts. He asked if staff suggested the roundabouts or if the committee suggested the roundabouts.

Mr. Barnett said he described the results of the traffic study to the committee, the options available for the roadway (including roundabouts or traffic lights and several options regarding number of

lanes) and the results of the options. Staff made his proposal to the group and the CAC was in agreement with that proposal.

Councilor Woodrow asked how large the sidewalks would be designed.

Mr. Barnett said they were designed at five feet.

Councilor Woodrow said he agrees that roundabouts will slow down traffic, but the main issue is safety of the children. He does not believe the roundabout is the best option.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if crossing walk areas must be at intersection.

Mr. Barnett said there was discussion at the committee meetings of having a crossing at the path from the school. It was noted that the path from the school is below the level of the road. This could be a danger regarding vision issues. The committee said not to put a crossing at that point, but rather put a treatment at the end of the path that would force the pedestrian to go laterally instead of crossing the roadway. The design would include directing pedestrians to go north and south along the roadway, some which are already in place.

Councilor Lundberg said it is important for the school to discuss this with the students so they understand where they need to cross and the safety of this project.

Councilor Fitch said there were mixed feelings from council. She asked if there were minor suggestions from council that would make them more comfortable.

Councilor Ralston said there should be breaks in the median near driveways to allow residents to get into and out of their properties without driving an extra block. Raised medians are difficult for students who may be riding bikes. At the end of the bike path, if there wasn't a raised median, it might make it easier. He asked about the center of the roundabout and if it was raised.

Mr. Barnett said it has a truck apron that is slightly raised.

Councilor Ralston said he supports the roundabout at Jasper Road, but would not support a roundabout at Mt. Vernon.

Councilor Lundberg said she would support the roundabout as the CAC recommendation, but suggested landscaping that does not obstruct vision. She would support the rest of the CAC recommendations.

Councilor Pishioneri said we need to respect the property owners who need to get in and out of their property. He supports the roundabout at Jasper Road and 42nd Street because of the intersection and agrees the landscaping should be low. He lives in Thurston and did not like the roundabout in that area at first, but now likes it and feels it works well. He suggested going further north for the access for students coming from the school and consider putting a break in the median so they could ride their bikes across at that point. The roundabout at Jasper Road would work well. He asked about vacating part of the property southwest of the roundabout.

Mr. Barnett said he and Mr. Paschall spoke with the property owner, Mr. Cramer, and told him the city would be willing to vacate that in terms of an easement. It would be at Mr. Cramer's initiation whether or not to vacate that piece of his property.

Councilor Pishioneri appreciated the forethought of the CAC regarding the railroad crossing and not putting a signal at the Mt. Vernon intersection.

Councilor Fitch said she would like to see access to the properties on the west side or to hear from the property owners stating that for the safety of the children they are willing to forego direct access. She discussed the crossing for the children from the school path and where it should be located.

Mr. Keegan said the biggest concern is after hours and in the summer when children cross that roadway.

Discussion was held regarding the location and design of the crossing.

2. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway (MLK Jr. Parkway).

Transportation Manager Nick Arnis and Traffic Engineer Brian Barnett presented the staff report on this item. The council approved the design concepts for the MLK Jr. Parkway in July 2004 which included a multi lane roundabout at the Hayden Bridge Way/MLK Jr. Parkway. Staff agreed during the approval process to come back to the council if any of the concepts were modified significantly or if costs or project impacts were significant. Staff is recommending right turn slip lanes be included in the roundabout design; these slip lanes were in the approved conceptual design. A consultant was hired to review and make recommendations about the staff design for the roundabout. The consultant recommended and staff agrees that right turn southbound slip lanes be constructed in the roundabout. The slip lanes will distribute high right turn volumes into a separate lane which improves the flow and congestion level of the roundabout. In addition, the refinement of the design concept for the roundabout indicates that not as much parking will have to be removed from Hayden Bridge Way as anticipated. Conceptual designs in June 2004 showed that 46 parking spaces would be removed whereas now only 33 parking spaces will be removed.

Staff recommends that right turn slip lanes be constructed in the multi lane roundabout at Hayden Bridge Way/MLK Jr. Parkway intersection.

Mr. Barnett referred to a map showing the changes to the roundabout design and how it would lessen the number of parking spaces removed. The roundabout is essentially a two lane roundabout with one exception where there is only one lane. The single lane is all that is needed in that location for the left turn and movement of traffic. He described the right turn partial slip lane in several areas. He explained the difference between the partial slip lane and a full slip lane. He referred to the table on page 2 of Attachment 1 in the agenda packet which analyzed the decision factors for constructing right turn slip lanes with the current MLK Jr. Parkway project or waiting until a future point in time when congestion reaches a level that requires the slip lanes. He explained the advantages and disadvantages of the different options.

Councilor Woodrow asked if the crosswalks would be light controlled. His concern is that right now people drive quite fast up the right lane from Gateway onto Pioneer Parkway because they know the speed limit on Pioneer Parkway is 45 m.p.h. This poses a safety risk. He said it doesn't seem logical that people coming from the PeaceHealth site going to Eugene would go through Harlow Road. Those living in Springfield would go through the roundabout or go down Harlow Road. Most people who live in Eugene would go out on Beltline Road. He asked if the city owned the properties where the lanes are proposed.

Mr. Barnett said the curvature of the roadway at Harlow and Pioneer Parkway will govern how fast cars can go around that corner. The maximum speed would be 20 m.p.h. It is critical to have good sight lines on that approach. He said the city owns three properties and has made an offer on the fourth piece of property.

Councilor Ralston said there does not seem to be a need for a slip lane for traffic going east on Harlow Road. It looks too close to the doctor's office near that location.

Mr. Barnett referred to the testimony during the public hearing on the roundabout when the Larson's, who own that office, testified in favor of constructing the roundabout. Since that time, staff have had discussions with the Larsons regarding the potential for a land swap where they would provide some right of way for the right turn lane and some of the unused city right of way adjacent to their parking lot could be provided to them. They would like to expand their parking lot and have found this proposal favorable. Staff is being sensitive to retain adequate space to allow them to continue to do business at that location and that is one reason for the location of the roundabout.

Mr. Arnis said the primary reasons for the right turn slip lanes came from the traffic analysis. The move that is impacted the most is the right turn lane. The level of service on that lane reaches its capacity very quickly. If the right turn lane was put in now, it could be very useful and if it is put in later in the future, it would cost more money. Staff has always known that with a multi-lane roundabout right turn slip lanes could be an option in the future.

Councilor Lundberg said there is a lot of traffic coming down Game Farm Road especially at peak hours. That traffic, if diverted from Game Farm Road would take the Pioneer Parkway. She said more lanes would do nothing other than just create more lanes. She feels it will be tougher on pedestrians. There is a lot of traffic and a lot of congestion. Slip lanes will keep traffic moving better, and it is not an issue with Dr. Larson's office. It would give them better parking. She feels it will be a pedestrian safety issue.

Councilor Pishioneri said this is a growth issue, and it is the job of the council to look to the future. He believes roundabouts are safer than what is there now. The city needs to look at the volume of traffic in the future. There is a lot of development going on in that area. This could take some pressure off the Gateway area. It would be most cost effective today and wise for the future.

Councilor Ralston said he heard a comment from a neighbor that is not happy about having a straight view of the roundabout.

Mr. Arnis said there would be a soundwall that would block that view. He said staff would continue designing the multi-lane roundabout with the right turn slip lanes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 pm.

Minutes Recorder – Amy Sowa

Sidney W. Leiken

Mayor

Attest:

Amy Sowa
City Recorder